

# MARINE RECREATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAM

**FY Project Plan**

**Washington MRIP Consultant's Review Sampling Ocean Fisheries in "Shoulder" Months**

**Created on**

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# **1. Overview**

## **1.1. Background**

Comprehensive and sound management of recreational finfish fisheries in Washington State requires information on catch, effort, and stock-specific fishery impacts necessary to meet established conservation and allocation mandates. These data are federally required to open and manage recreational fisheries, especially considering the need to limit and monitor impacts to threatened species. For the Washington ocean Marine Catch Areas (Areas 1-4), these critical fishery information needs are met through the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Ocean Sampling Program (OSP).

To generate estimates of marine fish catch and effort in ocean Marine Catch Areas (for the “private boat” and “charter boat” modes), WDFW employs a procedure based on data collected by an access point intercept survey. The OSP survey is designed to provide both total effort and catch per unit effort (CPUE). These data are used to generate estimates of total catch and effort by Marine Catch Area, month, and fishing mode which are provided to the Recreational Fishery Information Network (RecFIN , [www.recfin.org](http://www.recfin.org)).

Currently, ocean fishery sampling occurs in all major ocean access ports during “peak” effort months, May through September. Access sites that showed effort during March, April and/or October were sampled in recent years at a lower rate but continuous state and federal funding reductions have forced OSP to use all available funding to cover peak effort months. It is clear from previous sampling and from the 2011-2012 Washington coastal winter sampling MRIP project that March, April, October, and November have the potential to be significant contributors to total ocean groundfish catch. We hope to assess this contribution by fully sampling these time periods for a third consecutive year to determine whether a “correction factor” will be appropriate when funding for these time periods is unavailable. This proposal funds sampling of these months in all major Washington ocean access ports and addresses undercoverage issues identified by the 2010 MRIP Consultant Review of the Washington Ocean Sampling Program.

## **1.2. Project Description**

The proposed project implements one of the recommended actions resulting from the MRIP’s 2010 review of the WDFW OSP. During that review, the MRIP consultants (experts in sampling design, statistics, and estimation methods) recommended specific actions that OSP could implement to improve total ocean catch estimation. The major category of improvement recommended by the MRIP consultants was to address under-coverage issues.

Two proposals to address the temporal sampling portion of this recommendation have been funded previously by MRIP. Beginning in October, 2011 and continuing through April, 2013, these projects allowed full sampling of all major Washington coastal access sites during all months

typically not sampled or sampled at a very low rate. This includes October through April. Data collected during the 2011-2012 MRIP winter sampling project indicates that March and April contribute significant groundfish catch in most major coastal Washington ports, with October and November contributing to total catch in most ports as well. The months of December through February have thus far proved to have minor or no effort or catch in all coastal ports; this assessment will continue through April, 2013.

The intent of this project is to address the coverage recommendations that came out of the MRIP review of OSP. The OSP has been sampling the “shoulder months” (March, April, and October) for several years in Westport and Neah Bay at a lower rate. However, it is fairly certain that shoulder month sampling will be impossible beginning in October, 2013 without new sources of funding. The State was granted an exemption from the National Angler Registry on the merits of our sampling programs and we hope to hold the structure of the OSP intact. However, if that is impossible, we hope to determine whether using a “correction factor” to estimate catch and effort from non-sampled timeframes is appropriate.

Catch and effort during shoulder months are lower than in the peak months but are significant in some areas. With such tight harvest margins on species like yelloweye and canary rockfish, catch estimates in those shoulder months could make the difference in a decision to close a fishery early. Catch and effort during shoulder months is variable and weather-dependent, and ratio adjustments based on averages may or may not be precise enough to use in a closure decision that would have major economic consequences.

This proposed project requests funds to continue full sampling of “shoulder months” – March, April, October, and November in all coastal ports as detailed below. Work on this project would begin October 1, 2013, and cease on April 30, 2014, with a final report completed by September 30, 2014. This will be the final season of a 3-year assessment; if we conclude that ratio adjustments based on averages are not precise enough to use in a closure decision, we will pursue additional stable funding to sample this time period.

### **1.3. Objectives**

The objective of this project is to collect recreational fishing catch and effort data in all major ocean access ports during the months adjacent to the normally-sampled time frame that have demonstrated significant catch or effort during the last two sampling projects. This includes March, April, October, and November in Neah Bay, La Push, Westport, and Ilwaco. This project would commence on October 1, 2013 and conclude on April 30, 2014.

### **1.4. References**

Evaluation of Washington ocean recreational catch and effort from minor ocean access sites near the Washington coast. Consultant's Report: Preliminary Review of Washington's Ocean Sampling

Program (OSP)

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Methodology**

Sampling design would be identical to that currently used by the OSP during “peak” months (complete documentation is available on the RecFIN website, <http://www.recfin.org/documents/wa-osp-methods102008-0>). Each port would be assigned one sampler during the months of March, April, October, and November, and staff may be stationed either in the port or in the Montesano office. Sampling would be coordinated by permanent staff in the WDFW Region 6 office in Montesano, WA; these staff would pick up data from samplers bi-monthly, and estimates of recreational effort and catch would be generated and provided to the RecFIN database monthly by the last day of the following month.

### **2.2. Regions**

### **2.3. Geographic Coverage**

Washington's major ocean access points, Neah Bay, La Push, Westport, and Ilwaco, WA

### **2.4. Temporal Coverage**

September 2013 - September 2014 (sampling during October - April)

### **2.5. Frequency**

See sampling methodology

### **2.6. Unit of Analysis**

Vessel based survey (private and charter vessels)

### **2.7. Collection Mode**

Intercept survey

### **3. Communications Plan**

#### **3.1. Internal**

Internal communication will consist of a bi-monthly email report distributed to the project team during the sampling period detailing number of boats sampled by general activity (fishing or non-fishing) and anglers encountered, and whether or not fish were observed. The internal project team will also receive a copy of the catch estimates provided externally as well as the final report (described below).

#### **3.2. External**

Monthly reporting to the MRIP Operations Team will occur through the MRIP online reporting system reporting activity on the project and sampling results as described above. In addition, catch estimates will be provided monthly to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission for incorporation into the RecFIN database; these estimates will be provided within 30 days of the end of each month (eg. by November 30, 2013, for October 2013). A final report on the project will be submitted to the Operations Team by September 30, 2014.

## **4. Assumptions and Constraints**

### **4.1. New Data**

No

### **4.2. Track Costs**

### **4.3. Funding Vehicle**

RecFIN

### **4.4. Data Resources**

No data is required from NOAA. All data will be collected by OSP.

### **4.5. Other Resources**

Additional samplers will be needed to be hired and trained. More time from existing staff will also be required for sampler supervision, data entry, error checking, data analysis, catch estimation, and report writing.

### **4.6. Regulations**

No regulatory changes are required.

### **4.7. Other**

We are assuming funding will be available in time to hire, train, and begin sampling in October, 2013.

# 5. Risk

## 5.1. Project Risk

Table 1: Project Risk

Risk Description	Risk Impact	Risk Probability	Risk Mitigation Approach
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## **6. Final Deliverables**

### **6.1. Additional Reports**

Estimates of monthly catch and effort will be generated and provided to the RecFIN database.

### **6.2. New Data Sets**

Existing database will be used

### **6.3. New Systems**

None

# 7. Project Leadership

## 7.1. Project Leader and Members

Table 2: Project Members

Project Role	Name	Organization	Title
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## 8. Project Estimates

### 8.1. Project Schedule

Table 3: Project Schedule - Major Tasks and Milestones

#	Schedule Description	Planned Start	Planned Finish	Prerequisites	Milestones
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### 8.2. Cost Estimates

Table 4: Cost Estimates

Project Need	Cost Description	Date Needed	Estimated Cost
TOTAL			\$0.00